

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following amended paragraph:

[0042] The combination is solubilized in the organic solvent at a concentration of approximately at least 0.44 milligrams/milliliter. Generally, the concentration of carotenoids in combination solubilized in the organic solvent averaged at least 0.5 milligrams/milliliter. In several investigations, the concentration of carotenoids ranged from approximately 0.44 milligrams/milliliter to approximately 1.5 milligrams/milliliter. The carotenoids which are present in the composition of matter, i.e. first portion, are approximately at least 95% trans and approximately less than 5% cis. Moreover, the carotenoids are present in the first portion in mole ratio to the surfactant approximately 1.6-2.2:1 as noted from the NMR scans. Finally, the carotenoids are present in the first portion at a yield of approximately at least 32 milligrams/kilogram. It will be recognized by those of skill in the art that the above process for extracting carotenoids from fruit and vegetable sources in accordance with the present invention is particularly advantageous in that it produces an extraordinary high yield of near-pure, biologically active carotenoids.

Please replace paragraph [0043] with the following amended paragraph:

[0043] The first portion is also unexpectedly shelf stable over a wide temperature range and not affected by oxidation or ultraviolet light degradation. In other words, the composition of matter, i.e. first portion, is stable at standard temperature and pressure (0°C and 1 atmosphere), stable at increased or decreased temperatures and pressures, stable under ultraviolet light exposure and resistant to oxidation. For example, universally recognized carotenoid standards, such as from Sigma-Aldrich of 3050 Spruce Street, St. Louis, Mo. 63103 or Chromadex of 2952 South Daimler Street, Santa Ana, Calif. 92705, usually degrade from a 100% pure sample, when it leaves the supplier, to a 55% pure sample, when received by the testing laboratory. This degradation of the standard carotenoids occurs despite proper handling of the material.